1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

as a sign that the spot where it is placed is tabu, or, in more precise terms, that the spot must be avoided because of the presence there of a force or power that makes things dangerous. This force is present at the grave of a dead man, and therefore the fibre is placed at the grave to mark the fact, while a bunch is similarly suspended at the entrance to a village that is deserted after a death. In the peace-making ceremony the members of the one party stand against a suspended cane to which are attached strips of the fibre. The meaning of this, I think, is that it thus forbids the members of the other party from attacking them. If a man were to leave the screen of *kǫro*, he would, I believe, be liable to be killed by the enemy party; it is only as long as he stands against it with his arms outstretched that he is safe, because while there he is tabu.

How then does this belief in the fibre as a mark of tabu come about? The fibre is worn by the women of the Little Andaman to cover their pudenda, and it was formerly worn in this way by the women of the North Andaman. We may conclude that this was an old element in the Andaman culture dating back to the remote period when the inhabitants of the Little Andaman became separated from those of the Great Andaman. Now in a very special sense the sexual organs of women are tabu, and, without discussing the matter in detail, we may suppose that the Andaman Islander regards the genitals of women as a spot in which resides the same sort of force or power that makes the spirits, or the body of a dead man, dangerous. One point may be mentioned as throwing light on this subject, and helping forward the argument, namely that the natives of the North Andaman often use the expression *Lau-buku* (meaning literally "spirit-women" or "female spirits") to denote women collectively instead of the phrase that might be expected—*n'e-buku*. It would seem that by reason of their sex and the special ideas that are associated with it, women are regarded as having a very special relation with the world of spirits. We may conclude that the *kǫro* fibre, being a convenient material for the purpose, was first used as a covering for the women, and in this way came to be used as a sign of tabu in general, or else that for some unknown reason the fibre was selected as a suitable material to mark any kind of tabu, and

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

so came to be used both as a covering for women and also as a sign of warning at the grave and the village that has been visited by death[1].

To return from this digression to the question of the initiation of the dead man into the world of spirits, it is clear that since such ceremonies take time to accomplish there is a period during which the dead man is in an indeterminate position; he is no longer a member of the society of the living, and has not yet become a member of the society of the dead. As long as he is thus situated his relatives and friends are still attached to him, so that he still remains as it were in partial contact with the living. During this time the society is still suffering the ill effects of the death, and the process of readjustment by means of the customs of mourning is still taking place. At the end of it the dead man becomes completely absorbed in the spirit world, and as a spirit he has no more part in or influence over the social life than any other spirit, and the mourning is brought to a close by means of a ceremony.

This ceremony has two parts. One is the recovery of the bones and their reaggregation to the society, a rite which we may regard as the final settling of the dead man in his proper place. All that is left of him, who was once a source of strength to the community, who had once—as it is here expressed—a social value, are the bones, his name, and the memory of him that his friends retain. We may suppose that the bones still have something of the value that originally attached to their owner, and indeed it is evident that they have, for after they are recovered they are affectionately treasured as relics by the relatives. By the end of the period of mourning the painful feelings aroused by the death have died down, so that the dead man is now the object only of memories that are pleasant, or, at the worst, bittersweet. The bones, then, are visible evidences of the fact that the society has recovered from the disruptive shock of the death, and this is why they are dug up as soon as the recovery is complete, or rather in order to complete it, and are thereafter treasured.

[1] The brakes formed by the cane (*bido*) from the leaves of which the *koro* fibre obtained seem to be regarded as lurking places of the spirits. The natives often speak of the *Bido-tei-ian* (*Calamus* leaf spirits).

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

clay and red paint worn at a dance and after marriage and initiation is not only a means of display but is also protective. Both red paint and white clay are used to give protection in sickness, and they are similarly used in the purification of the hands of a homicide. Moreover we have seen, in reference to the word *ot-kimil*, that the dance is a condition of danger by reason of the contact it involves between the individual and the power of the society. The few days following an initiation ceremony are definitely believed to be a period of danger for the initiate, and during this time the pattern of white clay and red paint must not be washed off but must be allowed to wear off. By the time the last traces of the pattern have disappeared the danger is considered to be over. There is evidence that the first few days of marriage are regarded as a period of danger. It would seem that the natives do attribute to the painting with white clay and red paint some power of protection, but this is hidden under the importance of such painting as a means of display.

Of the various ornaments that are worn on the body some would seem to be worn almost solely for purposes of display, because they are pleasing to the eye. Such are the necklaces and other ornaments of small shells. It would seem that the same motive is also responsible for the use of the yellow skin of the *Dendrobium* of which the Andamanese are so fond. The ornaments of netting and shell seem to be worn primarily for display, but it is quite possible that some protective power is attributed to them, as to the paintings of white clay with which they are regularly worn. The belts of *Pandanus* leaf that are worn by women are a mark of the sex, and the style of belt worn differs with the social status of the woman. They thus serve to exhibit the special social value of the woman in so far as it depends upon her sex and her social status, but I believe that the Andamanese attribute to the belt and to the apron of leaves worn with it a power of protection against the special dangers to which women are believed to be subject. Ths is suggested by the use of the *Pandanus* leaf in the ceremony at a girl's first menstruation[1]. I failed to discover any special ideas connected

[1] I am unfortunately obliged to leave a big gap in this chapter and in the book, owing to my inability to discuss the Andamanese notions about sex. The natives of

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

X 182
301

with the ornaments of *Pandanus* leaf that are sometimes worn by both men and women at dances. The ornaments that are worn primarily for their protective power are those made of human and animal bones and those of pieces of canes or of fibres of *Hibiscus* or *Ficus*. These are always made decorative by the addition of shells and yellow *Dendrobium* skin, and therefore besides their primary function also serve as means of display.

It is clear then that in the various methods of ornamenting the body the two chief motives that we have considered are so combined that they can hardly be estimated separately, and it is this mingling of motives that has led us to the final understanding of the meaning and social function of bodily ornament. Each of the different kinds of ornament serves to make manifest the existence of some special relation between the individual and the society, and therefore of some special relation between him and that system of powers on which the welfare of the society and of the individual depends. One of the most important aspects of the relation of the individual to the society is his dependence upon it for his safety and well-being and this is revealed in all painting and ornament worn for protection. But the society not only protects the individual from danger; it is the direct source of his well-being; and this makes itself felt in the customary regulation by which the use of the more important ornaments used for display is confined to occasions on which it is quite clear that his happiness is directly due to the society, such as a dance or feast. Thus the customs relating to the ornamentation of the body are of the kind that I have here called ceremonial. They are means by which the society exercises on

• 831

the Great Andaman at the present time show an unusual prudery in their conversation and dealings with white men, but there is good reason to suspect that this is due to the influence of officers who have been in charge of the Andaman Home in former years. At the present time all the men except a few of the oldest in remote parts are very careful never to appear before a white man without some covering although formerly they wore nothing. In their conversation in the presence of a white man they are careful to avoid reference to sexual matters. The men of the Little Andaman who have not come under the influence of the Andamanese Homes, still go naked and unashamed, and indulge in obscene gestures and jokes. At the time I was in the Andamans I failed to realise the very great importance of a thorough knowledge of the notions of a primitive people on matters of sex in any attempt to understand their customs, and therefore failed to make the necessary enquiries.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onges

Western standards taciturn or sly, and the Negro peoples, who frequently manifest complete abandonment in their amusement. Obscenities appear to be an unfailing source of amusement to the Onges, who indulge in them at every opportunity, even with strangers, and the obscene dances of the womenfolk are a continual source of pleasure. The exchange of obscenities is, indeed, a sign of friendship, and I found that vulgarity was invariably immensely successful in provoking hilarity; any subsequent negotiations were always peaceable and satisfactory.

An extension of this vulgarity is an infantile vanity, not without sexual significance. The care with which their bodies are painted nearly every day is one aspect of this vanity; the more a wife loves her husband the more magnificent the designs she executes on him. The paintings on their bodies reach a peak every two or three days, as the Onges fear illness and death if they are not newly daubed, and the face at least must be continually painted, with at least smears on the chest, arms and legs. A man returning from an exceptionally successful hunting trip is met by his wife with a specially unusual and elaborate design, which she carries out with great devotion. During each of my visits to the island the Onges would rush up to show me their embellishments as soon as they were finished, and took a delight in standing in front of my camera, even though they had no idea what it was for.

It is curious that unlike most primitive peoples, the Onges do not practise tattooing, which is one of the simplest ways, if not *the* simplest, in which such peoples satisfy their craving for physical admiration. The other Andamanese do, puncturing the skin with tiny slivers of obsidian or quartz, but the Onges paint with ochre instead. They love, too, to weave garlands of fruit, flowers and leaves from the forest, returning to the camp laden with them, men and women alike, delighted with their own beauty. This divergence of customs in peoples essentially of the same stock, but separated for long periods of time into endogamous isolates, is very remarkable.

An intense preoccupation with sexual attraction and activity has led to the prevalence of aberration. All the Onges have homosexual tendencies. I became aware of this during my first visit to Little Andaman on one of my longer expeditions, when I had taken only men with me, and on subsequent occasions I therefore allowed the men to bring their wives. The effect of long periods of absence on